

(c) whether Government had also offered a \$100 million credit to Sri Lanka and if so, the terms of the credit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) The Minister of External Affairs visited Sri Lanka from June 11-12, 2000 and held discussions with the Sri Lankan President, Foreign Minister, Leader of the Opposition and several other political leaders.

With regard to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, the talks focussed on measures to achieve a lasting peace through a political settlement within the framework of the unity, sovereignty and integrity of Sri Lanka in a manner which would meet the aspirations of all communities.

During the visit, India offered to extend Sri Lanka a credit line of US\$ 100 million on terms to be mutually worked out between the two Finance Ministries. The possibilities of Sri Lanka's purchasing wheat, rice and sugar on a counter trade basis from India, were also discussed. The terms of the line of credit are under negotiation.

Visit By Chinese Foreign Minister to India

2080. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chinese Foreign Minister has recently paid a visit to India;

(b) if so, the details of bilateral agreements etc., held with Chinese Foreign Minister;

(c) whether the quesiton to LAC was discussed with him and if so, the outcome thereof; and

(d) to what extent relations between India and China have been strengthened?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (d) China's Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan visited India on July 21-22, 2000. During the visit, the two sides agreed to promote bilateral economic relations, enhance military-to-military exchanges, convene the first meeting of the India-China eminent Persons Group at an

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early date, and, raise the bilateral Security Dialogue to the level of Additional Secretary. There was also agreement on expediting clarification of the LAC through more frequent meetings of the India-China Expert Group of Diplomatic and Military Officials.

Our relations with China are improving. The two sides have agreed to develop friendly, co-operative, good-neighbourly and mutually beneficial relations based on Panchsheel.

Violation by Pakistani fishing boats in Indian territorial waters

2081. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of times Pakistani fishing boats and others violated Indian territorial waters limits during 1999 and the current year so far;

(b) what are the areas which are frequently violated; and

(c) the steps taken to meet the challenge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) According to available information, no incident of violation of Indian territorial waters (from baseline to 12 nautical miles) by Pakistani fishing boats has occurred. However, 25 Pakistani fishing boats have been apprehended from January 1999 till date for entering the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (from baseline upto 200 nautical miles).

(b) The Indian Exclusive Economic Zone off the Gujarat Coast is the area usually violated by Pakistani fishermen.

(c) The Navy and the Coast Guard ships/aircraft conducts regular surveillance to protect our Maritime Zones and safeguard national interest in our Exclusive Economic Zone. Extensive surveillance by Coast Guard ships and aircraft is also undertaken in the sensitive areas.